

THE FOREIGN SERVICE ACT OF 1946

The Foreign Service Act of 1946 reorganizes the Foreign Service of the United States, increases the salaries and allowances, establishes a new promotion and retirement system, provides for additional training and re-Americanization of Foreign Service officers, and codifies previous legislation.

The bill as introduced in Congress is the result of over two years study by the Department of State, and of a series of conferences held with a Sub-committee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. It aims to improve, strengthen, and expand the overseas arm of American foreign policy when the execution of that policy in the field has become of greatest importance.

Although the bill itself is over 100 pages in length, the principal changes in the organization and operation of the Service may be briefly summarized. The great length of the bill is due to the gathering together of all previous legislation into one basic charter.

The provisions dealing with reorganization of Foreign Service personnel set up five basic groups. These consist of Ambassadors and Ministers, Foreign Service officers, Foreign Service Reserve officers, Foreign Service staff officers and employees, and alien personnel. The structure of the Service, through the addition over a period of years of various small categories, has become extremely complex, difficult to administer, and in some cases inequitable.

Although there is little change in the status of Ambassadors and Ministers, except for the long overdue increases in pay and allowances referred to later, the organization of the Foreign Service officer corps is materially altered. The present 11 classes are reduced to 7, the highest one being a new class known as Career Ministers. By the establishment of this class it will be possible for Foreign Service officers to become Ambassadors and Ministers without resigning from the Foreign Service itself.

A new arm of the Service made up of Foreign Service Reserve officers is established to give flexibility in meeting numerical and functional needs. These officers will have the same rights, privileges, pay, and allowances as Foreign Service officers. They will be drawn from other branches of the government and from civilian life and will be specialists in such fields as aviation, petroleum, telecommunications, and information and cultural work. They will serve for periods not to exceed 4 years, but in cases where individuals show particular talent for Foreign Service work, they may become permanent members of the Foreign Service.

The Foreign Service staff arm is also set up by this bill to include all other American employees of the Service. Salaries will range up to \$10,000 per annum, and an equitable classification system is presented which will greatly simplify administration.

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Alien personnel employed by the Foreign Service are placed in a separate arm with a separate pay scale and separate administration.

A completely new pay scale is set up for Ambassadors and Ministers which provides for 4 classes, dependent upon the importance of the mission. The four classes are to receive salaries of \$25,000, \$20,000, \$17,500 and \$15,000. Currently based on the pay scale of 1855, Ambassadors and Ministers receive either \$17,500 or \$10,000 per annum. The salaries of Foreign Service officers which now range from \$3,271 to \$10,000 per annum will range from \$3,300 to \$13,500.

The legislation provides for needed allowances for Foreign Service personnel serving abroad, in addition to the present rent, cost of living, and representation allowances. The new allowances include a transfer allowance, a maintenance allowance for residences of principal officers abroad, and the authority to reimburse expenses resulting from illness or injury incurred in line of duty.

In order to provide for a more highly trained Foreign Service, the bill establishes a Foreign Service Institute which, like the Army and Navy Staff Colleges, will train Foreign Service personnel progressively throughout their careers. Also aimed at improving the quality and value of the Foreign Service personnel are the provisions to increase the amount of time spent in the United States. The bill provides that Foreign Service personnel must complete 2 years of service abroad before receiving home leave, as compared with the present requirement of 3 years. It also requires that 3 of the first 15 years of service of Foreign Service officers must be spent in the United States.

Finally, the new legislation sets up a promotion-up and selection-out procedure somewhat similar to that now followed by the Navy. This applies only to Foreign Service officers and provides that officers who fail to develop and as a result fail of promotion, will be retired. In this way it is hoped to keep Foreign Service officers at all levels developing continuously and prevent the accumulation at any level of personnel who have passed their peak of performance.